

Federal Communications Commission:

To Whom it May Concern:

Sinclair Broadcasting's plans to require its 62 television stations nationwide to air a one-sided anti-John Kerry documentary days before the election in prime time is a chilling example of the dangers of media consolidation in America.

The freedom to broadcast original legitimate news coverage is one thing, but what Sinclair proposes is something else entirely. Pre-empting network programming to air what is essentially a 40-minute negative (and likely misleading) campaign ad is an attempt to circumvent laws that govern campaign advertising and equal time provisions, and it is wrong. From all indications, this "documentary" is comparable in content and style to highly controversial television ads from the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth and other poorly regulated Section 527 groups. Unless Sinclair plans to show a 40-minute clip from *Fahrenheit 9/11* immediately following *Stolen Honor*, there is no defense for their actions.

Sinclair's stations broadcast over public airwaves free of charge, and they are obligated by law to serve the public interest. But today, with fewer and fewer large corporations controlling more and more of the nation's media outlets, bottom-line biases threaten to take away the valuable Fourth Estate needed to maintain a healthy democracy. Instead of partisan infomercials, stations should offer substantive news coverage of issues like the 2004 presidential campaign.

Sinclair's reprehensible actions show why we need to bolster media ownership rules and enforce current regulations to the letter. The FCC should inform Sinclair that its license renewal process should not to be taken for granted. I hope you'll agree that this issue is considerably more important than any Super Bowl 'wardrobe malfunction,' and treat it accordingly. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chad Friesen
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